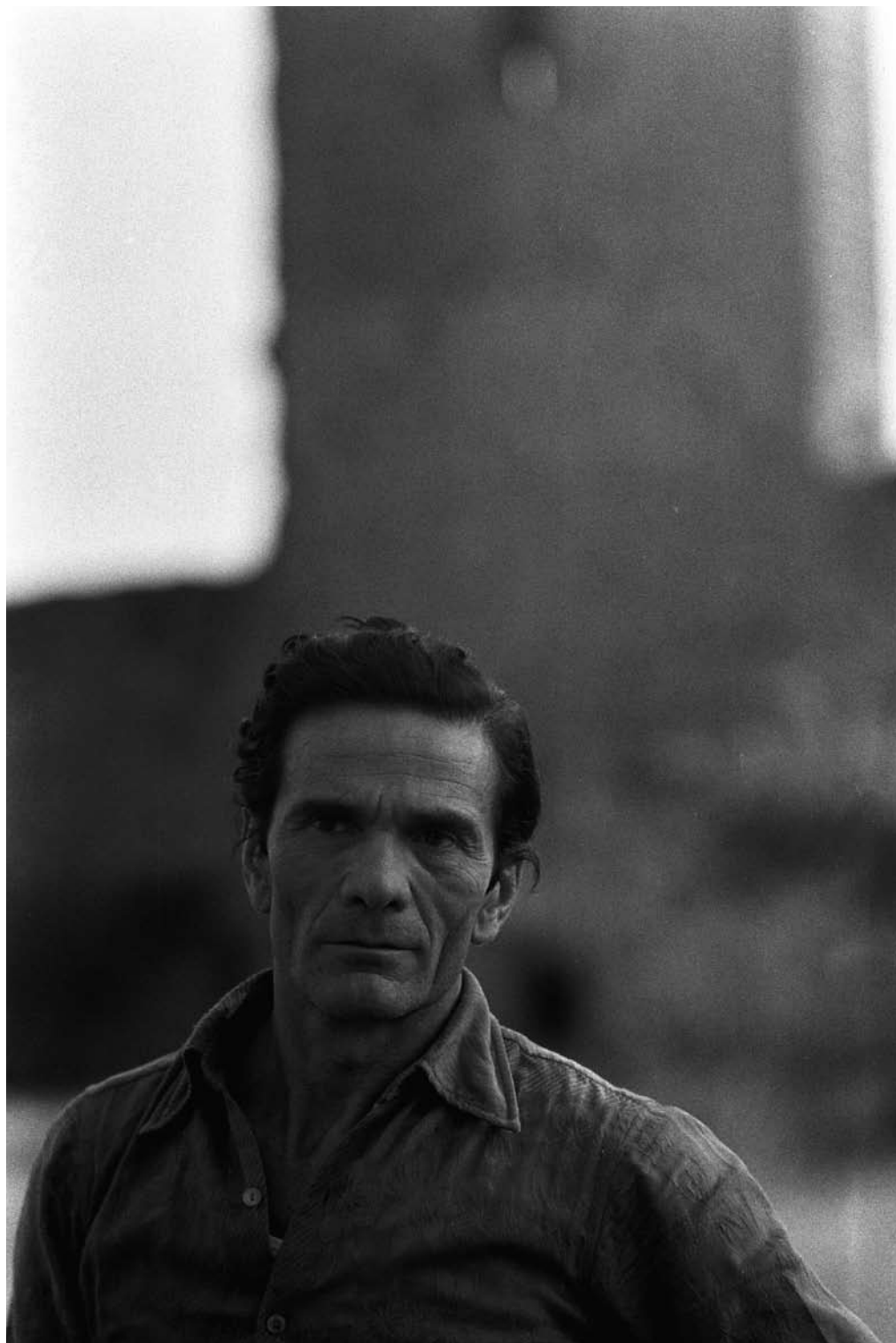


FIRENZE architettura

1.2015



costruire con poco



Periodico semestrale
Anno XIX n. 1

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In copertina:
Pier Paolo Pasolini a Torre di Chia, 1974
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Aires Mateus



Quando costruire POVERO diventa LUSO

Maria Grazia Eccheli

Nella spiaggia degli Alberoni, al Lido di Venezia - lontano dai sovraccarichi saloni dell'Hotel des Bains - Luchino Visconti disegna una corte di sabbia disponendo ad U semplici cabine di legno; con tende a righe bianche e grigio/azzurre sorrette da esili sostegni, amplifica poi quell'ombra necessaria a incanalare la brezza del mare nelle afose ore di ozio.

Nel film più proustiano di Visconti, dove si consuma il desiderio di Gustav "von" Aschenbach per l'efebico Tadzio, la corte di sabbia è abitata da semplici sdraio e midollini, dai fruscii dei bianchi vestiti di donne riparate da ampi cappelli, dall'incedere di una elegantissima quanto pallida e silenziosa Silvana Mangano... L'atmosfera dello "scendere a mare", declinata da scarni utensili sulla sabbia, la leggerezza che proviene da un rigoroso lavoro, dalla memoria, da saper fare con poco e bene, sembrano migrare - in una stagione dominata dal fare troppo, dal fare male - dalla laguna di Venezia nell'Alentejo.

Incanto e disincanto in un lembo di terra incuneato tra l'estuario del Rio Sado e l'oceano, un parco naturale dove pare non siano ammesse nuove costruzioni... Quattro capanni di pescatori dal caratteristico tetto di paglia - due costruiti in muratura e due con struttura in legno e canne - divengono le "CASAS" di COMPORTA, nel restauro-trasformazione dei Mateus.

L'idea di progetto, il dialettico criterio dei temi attinenti al ri-uso, è già nell'interpretazione dei quattro edifici: disposti a semicerchio a formare una corte di sabbia aperta sul mare, sono pensati come le diverse stanze di un'unica abitazione [di un abitare l'estate].

La loro divisione/distinzione, causa forse dell'analitica attribuzione di destinazioni - tre di essi, infatti, divengono camere - viene esibita ma contemporaneamente ricomposta da passerelle in legno che scorrono loro tangenti sopra la sabbia rovente, quasi a ribadire l'unicificante morfologia della corte.

Tutte le aperture rivolte al cortile si trasformano in porte, a esprimerne il ruolo di IMPLUVIUM quasi definito da un virtuale portico inesistente.

Se il restauro delle due case in muratura - un letto e un bagno in ciascuna - consiste in un adeguamento termico mediante il raddoppio della muratura, trasfigurate dall'impagabile intonaco bianco a restituire la luce oceanica, l'adeguamento delle due case in legno, per complessità, sembra essere all'origine dell'idea stessa del progetto.

Le due case/stanze in legno sono state smontate e rimontate secondo un'attenta interpretazione di antiche tecniche costruttive del luogo, col risultato che la nuova struttura lignea, identica all'interno come all'esterno, diviene spazio e decorazione allo stesso tempo. Le canne, alternate e sorrette da correnti di legno orizzontali, caratterizzano l'elegante (semperiana?) texture di tutte le pareti.

Ma la nuova interpretazione del luogo ha il suo vertice nella casa/stanza dove ci si incontra: dell'ultimo capanno, è la sabbia a "costruire", proseguendo nell'interno, la pavimentazione. Così il camminare a piedi nudi sulla spiaggia continua dentro dove sprofondano divani coperti da bianchi teli.

Forse per la forma archetipica degli edifici, un che di ancestrale e attuale al tempo stesso - assieme ad evocazioni di teoremi illuministi sulla capanna

2

Casa na Areia
 Comporta, Portugal
 2010

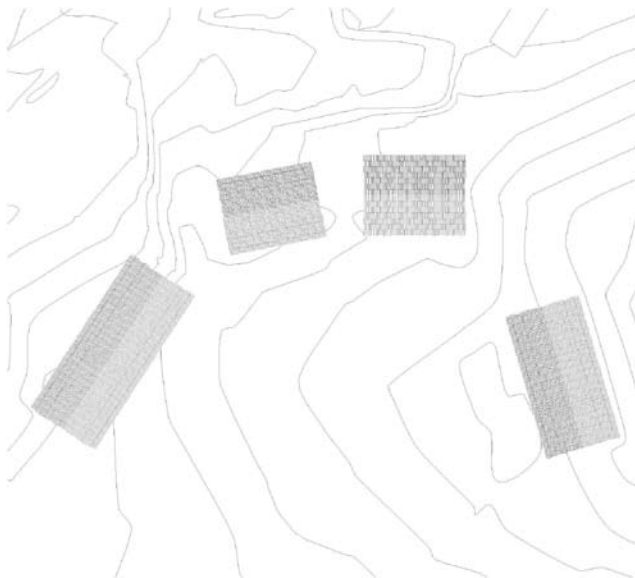
Architects:
 Aires Mateus

Coordinator:
 Maria Rebelo Pinto
 Collaborator:
 Humberto Fonseca
 Client: João Rodrigues
 Photographs:
 © Nelson Garrido

Cabanas no Rio
 Comporta, Portugal
 2013

Architects:
 Aires Mateus

Coordination:
 Maria Rebelo Pinto
 Collaborators:
 Luz Jiménez, David Carceller
 Photographs:
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plan site



section

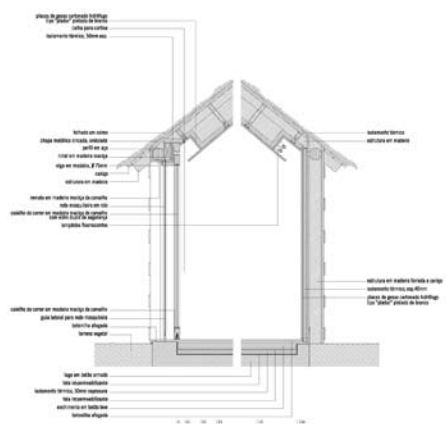
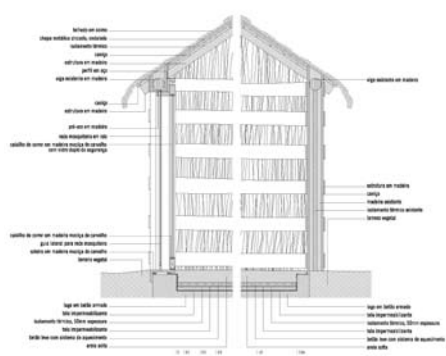
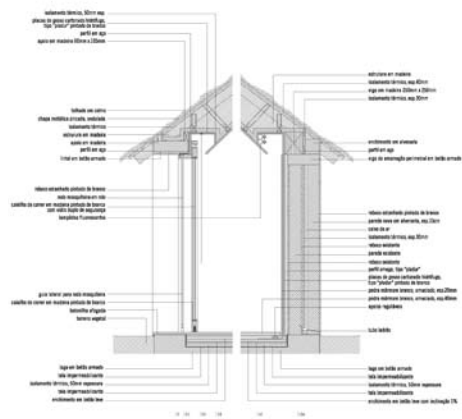
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plan site



4



Pagine precedenti:

1

Il luogo

2

Le case col tetto di paglia

3 - 4

Piante, prospetti e sezioni

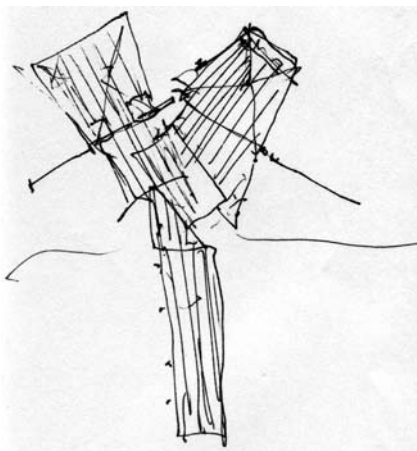
5 - 6

Dettagli costruttivi e texture della facciata

7

La sabbia entra nella stanza





8



9

come modello originario - s'aggira attorno ai quattro edifici, donando loro una sorprendente profondità...

Poco lontano i Mateus nel costruire due CABANAS, sembrano voler continuare il prezioso paesaggio della Reserva Natural do Estuário do Sado. Un paesaggio di acqua e palafitte: una laguna/estuario che le maree dell'oceano mutano incessantemente, alternando allo splendore degli azzurri di cielo e acqua il grigio

sabbioso dei fondali di intricati ed invisibili canali da cui fuoriesce un bosco di palafitte. Un mondo di legno per camminare sull'acqua, per l'attracco di piccole barche e abitato da capanni e pescatori. Due piccoli parallelepipedi costruiti con assi di legno di recupero disposti in verticale. I due volumi acquistano sicurezza nel paesaggio declinando la propria individualità attraverso quasi invisibili gesti: un disassamento tra le due giaciture che contemporaneamente mette in risalto

l'affinità e diversità della geometria dei tetti dettata da inclinazioni necessarie per lo smaltimento dell'acqua piovana. Anche qui si tratta di una endiadi funzionale: le due piccole stanze - di circa 10 mq ciascuna - sono infatti complementari, un capanno contiene il letto e i servizi che, sorprendentemente, ne costituiscono anche l'ingresso e sono apribili verso il pieno paesaggio; il secondo è dedicato alla zona giorno... delle assi poste sulla spiaggia uniscono i tempi - il

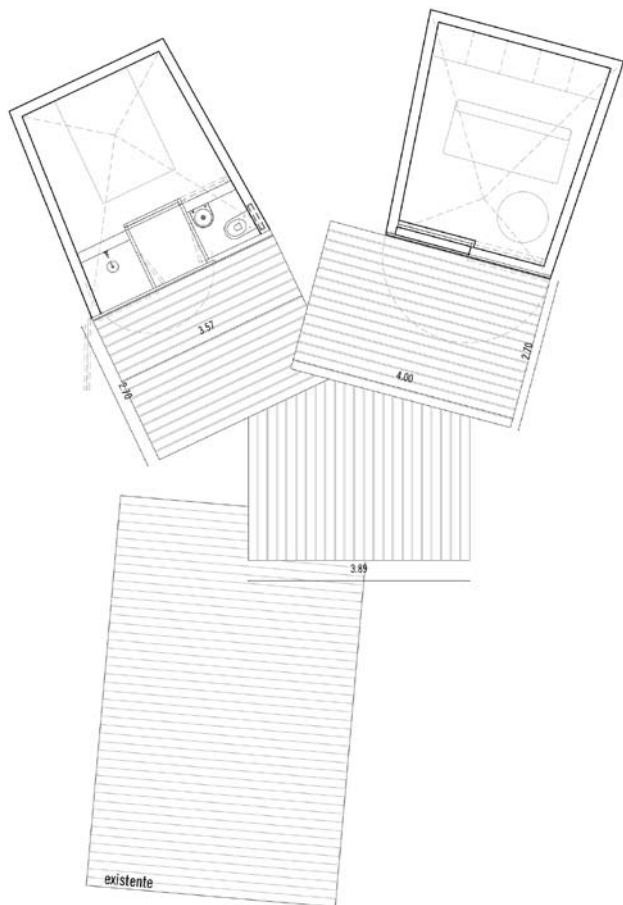


giorno e la notte – mentre un percorso in legno porta a un vecchio pontile, il vero confine tra terra e acqua.

L'unità di materiale (il legno antico), la modalità della sua messa in opera - la sincerità della struttura caratterizza interno ed esterno - dona al tutto una unità cromatica che sorprendentemente si compone con l'orizzonte quasi invisibile.

Ho costruito sul mare un castello, di 3,66 x 3,66 metri, per mia moglie,

diceva LC del suo conosciutissimo Cabanon, prefabbricato in Corsica e trasportato in nave a Cap Martin, non lontano dalla casa degli amici Eileen Gray e Jean Badovici,... A Roquebrune, in un percorso che arriva quasi al mare tutto era piccolo: la porta, la scala e l'accesso alla cabina tra vigneti. Solamente grande il sito: una splendida baia con ripide scogliere.



PLANTA IMPLANTAÇÃO





Pagine precedenti:

8

Schizzo di progetto

9 - 11 - 12

Il paesaggio: Estuário do Sado e cabanas

10

Pianta





13



two wings (built at different moments during the Seventies). Direct access from the courtyard gives the sense of rooms of passage, one within the other, recalling an ancient, perhaps rural or peasant way of life.

A cursory wooden bridge with bayonet railings – boundary between the flat-land and the private space of the poet – serves as entry into the stone parallelepiped at the base of the broken tower. There, as in fairy-tales, are four doors: two placed at the axis of the castle and the house – the spaces at the interior and exterior of the walls: north and south – the two other opposite doors are at the centre of the dwelling spaces: to the east the bedroom, the bathroom and the studio; to the west his mother Susanna's bedroom, divided from the spacious living-room by a bathroom and a kitchenette. In contrast to the rest of the structure, which is placed against the wall, the living-room presents a sudden break: taking advantage of an existing breach, it distances itself from the base of the wall to invent itself as a wall-less pavilion, between the courtyard and the trees, in which the space is dominated by a large fireplace.

The rooms stand on a stone base which accommodates the uneven nature of the ground; in the interior spaces the flow of the narrative of the stone walls is punctuated by narrow gaps which allow the sunlight from the south, whereas towards the languid northern light the wooden walls are characterised by large windowpanes which dilate space towards infinity.

The CASTLE/HOUSE is a sort of theorem of light: nested within the eternal shadow which originates in the walled concavity, it assumes the role of the Lucretian spectator faced towards the full light of faraway landscapes, when "[the first ray of mere sun] distributes... to the buildings... the appearances of inhabited shells, which they are, of gesture and of life"².

The "house like myself" which PPP wanted, pursued, that he "designed" together with a very young Dante Ferretti, and realised with the same mastery with which they dealt with the demanding set designs for his films, is characterised by a timeless modernity.

In the rooms that the prophet loved one can still breathe the silence of faraway gazes, of readings and words written in industrious quiet; of skillful brush strokes on a thousand white sheets of paper, of presences and absences. His visage absorbed, the hands busy correcting a ream of texts typewritten with letter 22, the body defenseless in rooms of Franciscan simplicity: subjects immortalised, in the second week of October, 1975, by the camera of Dino Pedriali³. In his room/studio, facing infinity, PPP had placed a wooden table, Scarpa's Valmarana, and a comfortable leather armchair, "(...) next to the fireplace, on an uneven stone made flat by a glass pane, Pier Paolo would gather some books, those necessary, because – Graziella Chiarocci Cerami recounts – he would bring from Rome only those that he needed for writing"⁴.

Translation by Luis Gatt

¹ "In September, with Bassani at the wheel of his automobile, he went on a wonderful trip around Central Italy, following the footsteps of Giotto and Piero della Francesca: Florence, Arezzo, Perugia, Todi, Spoleto..." in Nico Naldini, *Pasolini, una vita*, Tamellini edizioni, Albaredo d'Adige (VR), April 2014 [Einaudi, Torino, 1989], p.208.

² Roberto Longhi, *Piero della Francesca*, 1923

³ Dino Pedriali's photos are published in: *Pier Paolo Pasolini, Fotografie di Dino Pedriali*, John&Levi ed, 2011.

⁴ A fragment of Graziella Chiarocci Cerami's stories during our journey from Rome to Chia. A heartfelt thank you to her for giving us the opportunity of visiting the rooms that her cousin PIER PAOLO loved, and for allowing us to consult precious documents.

A story of emotion. Travelling towards Pier Paolo Pasolini's hermitage in Chia by Andrea Volpe

(page 16)



The appointment was in Piazza Mazzini at 10.30. The taxi was late, brief pleasantries were exchanged. It was early May in Rome and there was already hot African weather. "You get the car, you drive it ...". Graziella smiled but decisively handed me the keys while I feigned nonchalance¹. Inside however I felt like exploding, from emotion, from the responsibility.

We departed. Direction Chia. But first we had to get out of Rome's *Foro Italico*, and *Ponte Milvio*, then the notorious *Ponte Flaminio* designed by Armando Brasini; the bridge on which Nanni Moretti in an episode of *Caro Diario* must pathologically pass over on his Vespa scooter at least twice a day. It's a scene that precedes a few minutes before another scene, which is accompanied by the music of Keith Jarrett's *Köln Concert*. As Nanni Moretti says in this scene, it is a journey towards "the place where Pasolini was killed".

Perhaps it's the most beautiful homage to Pasolini: dry, heart-breaking,

without rhetoric and in jealous naivety I even did it myself, obviously on a Vespa, during those days of my life in Rome.

I was thinking about this while I followed Graziella's directions for the *Autostrada del Sole*. And so another pilgrimage with scattered fragments of memories and disorder but at the same time there was a conscious effort of having to stay morally clean. After all we were not going to Lourdes.

Why then was this childish emotion trying to dominate me? Was there an unconscious desire for a miracle? Was I expecting some revelation or prophecy? In the meantime, the windshield revealed the damaged skyline of Orte, one of the set on "*La forma della città*"². The incongruous condo that troubled Pasolini so much was inevitably multiplied and turned into faux-rustic neighbourhoods with neat rows of industrial prefabricated buildings, which assaulted the hill and plains below. Yet it is still the most ancient and remote Tuscia that welcomed us. Despite the building of so many scars, that landscape for us hypersensitive motorway travellers is still the one described in the finale of Pasolini's confessional poem *Poeta delle Ceneri*³.

Indeed, at the River Jordan and the Middle East's Gospel according to St. Matthew one can find a few kilometres from the road at Torre di Chia the ancient early medieval fortification bought by Pasolini in 1970 where he wrote his final novel as a hermit.

I thought to myself that it was actually a bit difficult not to expect a sacred experience from this tour, or at least another baptismal rite. After all, we were heading towards the Palestine of Viterbo, renowned thanks to the movie and the mythology on which we grew up on⁴.

First though, with a little of tension in the air we stopped at a motorway service. Graziella couldn't find the keys to the house, which consequently lead us to the fear of a wasted trip. However, once past the gate that separated the forest from the large open space inside the ring of walls the feeling disappeared. A theatre company warmed up on music and songs. They came out of the wooden pavilion next to the medieval castle restored by Pasolini along with the young Dante Ferretti⁵. The poet used to draw in the pavilion.

The sun was up, the air hot, the light was too strong and the shadows were too dark, surely the worst time to take photos. But these issues were now irrelevant. The problem laid elsewhere. How could you reasonably record being there? How could you think of taking more photographs after those shot by Gideon Bachmann, Deborah Beer and Dino Pedriali, the last witness to the intimacy of the home of Chia⁶?

And then there was a presence, an absence so strong. Forty years have passed since the death of Pasolini and very few from that of Vincenzo Cerami. The house is still closed, hidden by the great wall that protected the ruins. It was inaccessible despite a wooden bridge with surprisingly Japanese characters, past the front rampart, on the plateau where we silently stood. And then there was the passageway to a narrow entrance.

To understand the place we carefully studied detailed records of black and white photographs: Pasolini posing before the walls, before the high tower of Chia, waiting at the front door as an enigmatic guest that still benevolently welcomed us. His spirit will live forever over that threshold. Transfigured in his home between the landscape, he is framed, protective looking.

Some of his last verses in dialect from *La nuova gioventù* (The New Youth) came to my mind. They illustrate nostalgia for rural culture in Friuli, where a similar humble beauty was turned into cinematic experience in the style of Chia Mountains. Caught in a sequence of windows, like frames of a long sequence shot, they turn north following the trail of ancient walls as if to embrace the distant Apennines.

"(I) The sun gilds Chia with its pink oaks and the Apennines know of hot sand. I am a dead man here, who returns today in a day of celebration March 5, 1974. [...] V Peasants of Chia! Hundreds of years or a moment ago I was in you. But now, from the time the land is abandoned you are not in me ..."⁷

The door was finally opened here. Feelings of denial, desire, were fulfilled by the miracle of crossing the threshold of this house, which is both a poem and a narrative film made of space, light and shadow. It was therefore a pure architectural fact. P.P.P. believed it to be an apodictic demonstration of the possibility of construction of the new by virtue of the profound dialogue with tradition. It was architecture literally supporting the old, to the strength of the past. It was time to go. We moved away from a house whose character "more modern than any modern" house⁸ was ultimately for us architects, too prone to enthusiasm, one of the most authentic selfportrait of Pasolini.

translation by Michael Phillips

¹ These brief notes seek to describe the atmosphere of the journey made to Torre di Chia last May 9, made possible thanks to the kind availability of Pier Paolo Pasolini's nephew Graziella Chiarocci Cerami.

² This refers to "Pasolini e...la forma della città", a short film directed by Paul Brunatto in the autumn of 1973 for Rai, an episode of *I and ...* tv show, curated by Anna Zanolli, a former student of Roberto Longhi. Roberto Chiesi includes this short film in Pasolini's body of work, *Lo sguardo di Pasolini la forma della città*, un film di Pier Paolo Pasolini e Paolo Brunatto in www.pasolini.it/articles/pasolini.htm, where he essentially puts together the suggestion by Naldini, Contini and Laurencin of the real possibility of inclusion in PPP's official filmography of Rai's episode which employed Brunatto as their established director.

³ *Ebbene ti confiderò prima di lasciarti che io vorrei essere scrittore di musica, vivere con degli strumenti dentro la torre di Viterbo che non riesco a comprare, nel paesaggio più bello del mondo, dove l'Ariosto sarebbe impazzito di gioia nel vedersi ricreato con tanta innocenza di querce, colli, acque e botri, e lì comporre musica l'unica azione espressiva forse, alta, e indefinibile come le azioni della realtà"* Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Poeta delle Ceneri*, Archinto editore, Milano, 2010 (revised edition based on the typewritten original document).

^{4a}“Le riprese di ‘Medea’, che inizialmente si intitolava ‘Le visioni della Medea’, iniziarono alle ore nove del 1 giugno 1969 a Uchisar, in Cappadocia [...] il 27, la troupe, ritornata in Italia, effettuò le riprese presso il fiume di Chia, non lontano da Viterbo, sottostante un’antica torre medievale...” in Roberto Chiesi, *Dossier Pasolini 1969-1972, I. Le visioni barbare di Medea*, in *Pasolini sconosciuto*, curated by Fabio Francione, Falsopiano Edition, Alessandria, 2008, p. 243

^{5a}“Ho aiutato Pasolini a costruire una casa di cristallo perfettamente trasparente e col tetto in erba, in località Chia in provincia di Viterbo: non si sa che fine abbia fatto...” in “Intervista a Dante Ferretti – Scatti corsari nel paese svelato da Pasolini”, Laura Laurenzi, *Il Venerdì di Repubblica*, 21 Ottobre 2011. Others interesting news concerning Pasolini’s intense relationships with the Tuscia region are reported in Silvio Cappelli, *Pier Paolo Pasolini: dalla Torre di Chia all’Università di Viterbo*, Vecchiarelli Editore, Manziana (Roma), 2004.

⁶ For a comprehensive presentation / interpretation of photos taken by Pedriali at the request of Pasolini and read by Elio Grazioli and Marco Bazzocchi “*Pasolini ritratto da Dino Pedriali*” <http://www.doppiozero.com/materiali/recensioni/pasolini-ritratto-da-dino-pedriali>

⁷ From *Cianti di un muàr in La nuova gioventù*, Einaudi, Torino, 1975.

⁸ Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Poesia in forma di rosa*, Garzanti, Milano, 1964. This verse read by Orson Welles and voiced by Giorgio Bassani, appear in the famous episode *La ricotta* in *RoGoPaG* later known as *Laviamoci il cervello*, 1963.

Toshiko Mori

Thread - The Sinthian Center: the Albers Cultural Center and Artists' Residency by Michelangelo Pivetta.

(page 26)



The Ariadne's thread

“Thousand steps always start by one.”

San old tribe proverb.

Africa holds the secret of man, hiding, at least in its most original part, everything that humanity is, every *beauty* and every *tragedy*. Anyone who had access to the knowledge of this secret will never be the same as before. Architecture, which everywhere is the most obvious and viral of man expression, it is not in Africa; there Architecture, the original one, loses any iconic value to magnificently reduce itself just into a necessity. It leaves the role of regulator at the case and the role of function to solve minimum problems: to protect from the rain or defend against other men or animals. The African history gave us memories of ancient and vast empires and the knowledge of their heroic architecture but, the *regressive evolution* imposed, in the last three hundred years, by the *white man* blocked the road to the hundreds of millions of people natural growth path.

As part of a kind of pitiful - in the sense of the latin *piety* concept - path of mending and rapprochement between *white* and *black* civilizations some valuable collaborations occur. The realization of many architectures capable to contain these operations is necessary. Sometimes these architectures, especially recently with roles that are beyond the simple functionality, become parameters of a cultural and social renaissance, accompanied in the same time by a synchronous awareness of their unique self-identity value.

Senegal between many countries in sub-Sahara Africa can be considered among lucky supporters of a miraculous balance, suspended between tribal tensions and geopolitical - and now religious - dynamics. The thick intellectuals and artists substrate that this country has over time cultivated and encouraged, certainly helped to reach and maintain this positive situation. The *Ecole de Dakar*, the *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*, the *Biennale de Dakar* are some fulcrums around which, since the sixties, collective experiences of expression materialized, allowing the trans-tribal and trans-religious sharing, plumping a particular and substantial consciousness of freedom and people communion. *Thread* fits as a part of this social and cultural capitalization. The main goal of this work is to welcome and to strengthen the local artists community that otherwise would be dispersed over the vast and difficult territory of the African country. Toshiko Mori, after a intense activity during which she has been involved in a lot of realizations immersed in the mellifluous landscapes of the USA East Coast, has dedicated itself to that project with an unprecedented design effort with a renewed and propulsive ability. Certainly this assignment could make a concrete commitment from always made, as a member of the *World Economic Forum Council*, under the theory that the architecture is, everywhere, one of the most appropriate responses to solve the social problems.

The realization of a Cultural Centre for the arts and artist in a rural area in Senegal appears as one of the themes to which every architect should aspire. To devise a functional architecture for the activities related to the arts in an inconvenient place for a community thirsting for culture and in need of places from which to evangelize it, it seems to enclose each key of the intimate idea of making Architecture.

The newyorker architect shrewdly developed the theme, exploiting every problem to her advantage and introducing in the project an approach that is in balance between tradition and innovation, simplicity of implementation with indigenous technology and sharing of unusual material that the African way of building made available.

A great canopy made using the typical African *thatch* - a roof built by weaving stalks of what we, in its African declination, would call sedge - performs the task of the main architectural object, but also is a water collector that supplies about half water need of the entire village. This cover embraces, protecting from the sun and rain, the spaces below that are divided in a seemingly random succession of solid and empty volumes around open and closed spaces, conceptualized not only according to a specific function but also according with an aspiration of indefinite utility.

Such as the geometry of interaction between the houses of any rural settlement in sub-Saharan Africa, even here, relations take place mostly outdoors, in those interstitial spaces that a thousands years old endemic wisdom of *spontaneous urban planning* can make the favorite places of socialization and life of tribal communities.

The building *rules* designed by Toshiko Mori follow a dynamic but soft, arhythmic but deliberately persuasive tensions progress that accompanying hand by hand the man without any hesitation. The composition critical *run-out* is the planimetric proposal in which the Japanese architect plays with the traditional forms. She swaps usual hierarchies, emptying and discovering the circular spaces that usually identify a full and covering the interstitial spaces that are normally opposed to the interstitial connective outdoors.

The references, used to create the roof structure and the wall portions for micro-ventilation, are *mnemonic resources* intended to suggest the origin of technical choices declared as necessary. This practice, common in best architecture projects, defines the possibility of reading a project through multiple layers depending by the scale of interaction that could be chosen by the observer. The first of these *resources* it is the structure of the roof that, in reference to the Japanese origins of its creator, is achieved through the bamboo binding according to something like the *Gasshō* of the *Minka* typical houses in the rural Japan. An act not withheld signing, almost undetectable, but clear and imperishable. The second *resource* concerns the design of the ventilating walls that participates, together with the geometry of the large roof, the false image of precariousness that the structure seems to communicate. Not only that, it wants to expose the memory of the client, or rather the promoter, through the ideal reproduction of one of his Op-art graphics.

Roberto Filippetti recently well explicate the terms of *modern hybrid* sense about some part of contemporary African architecture. Here it seems perfectly able to be fitted instead the concept of a hybridization leaning towards the need to exist and proud bearer of that sense of *pure poverty* originated by an essential, but at the same time perfectly declined, architecture.

What is also important in projects such as *Thread* it is the collaborative aspect of the building, its growth within a social group or a geographic location, its use for that it will be able to do extraordinarily determining, once again, as the architecture is unique tool to create civilization.

Thread means wire, but not only. A thread could be the unitary element capable to generate more complex weaving. A thread has the ability to bind, weave, connect. *Thread* is like an *Ariadne's Thread*, it is able to weave the community using the significance of art in order to increase the awareness and culture. It could be a vector capable to lead out from the darkness of poverty and radicalism labyrinth, reinforcing the relationship by the identity through the architecture language. This is the beginning of a long journey where *Thread* is the first essential step.

Aires Mateus

When building INEXPENSIVELY becomes a LUXURY

by Maria Grazia Eccheli

(page 34)



On Alberoni Beach, in Venice's Lido - far from the overcrowded *salons* of the Hotel des Bains - Luchino Visconti designed a sandy courtyard, with simple wooden cabins set as a U; with white and grey/blue striped curtains supported by a slender structure he then amplifies the necessary shade for channeling the sea breeze in the sultry hours of idleness.

In Visconti's most Proustian film, where Gustav von Aschenbach's desire for young Tadzio is worn out, the sandy courtyard is inhabited by simple beach chairs and reeds, by the rustling of the white dresses of women protected by wide hats, by the solemn gait of an elegant, pale and silent Silvana Mangano.

The atmosphere of the “descent to the sea”, with its spare assortment of utensils on the sand, the lightness which derives from rigorous work, from memory, from knowing how to do well with little resources, seems to migrate – in an era characterised by doing too much, and badly – from Venice’s Lagoon to the Alentejo. Enchantment and disenchantment on a strip of land wedged between the estuary of river Sado and the ocean, a natural park where new constructions are apparently not allowed. Four fishermen’s cabins with the traditional straw roofs – two built with bricks and two with wood and reeds – become the “CASAS” of COMPORTA, through the restoration-transformation by the Mateus brothers. The idea of the project, the dialectic criteria of the issues pertinent to re-usage, is already a part of the interpretation of the four buildings: disposed in a semi-circle in such a way as to form a sandy courtyard open on the sea, they are intended as the various rooms of a single dwelling [for inhabiting the summer]. Their division/distinction, caused perhaps by the analytic attribution of destinations – three of them, in fact, become rooms – is exhibited yet at the same time recomposed by wooden boardwalks which spread over the scorching sand, almost as if stressing the unifying morphology of the courtyard. All the openings that face the courtyard become doors, expressing the role of IMPLUVIUM, which is defined by a virtual in-existent portico.

If the restoration of the two brick houses – a bed and a bathroom in each – consists in a thermal adjustment through the doubling of the walls, transfigured by the priceless white plaster which gives back the oceanic light, the adaptation of the two wooden houses, a more complex endeavour, seems to be at the origin of the idea of the project itself. The two wooden houses/rooms were disassembled and reassembled following a careful interpretation of old local construction techniques, which result in a wooden structure that is the same both on the interior and the exterior, thus becoming space and decoration at the same time. The reeds, which are placed alternately and supported by horizontal wooden strips, characterise the elegant texture of all the walls. But the new interpretation of the place has its vertex in the house/room of the last cabin: it is the sand, which continued in the interior, constitutes the flooring. Thus walking barefoot on the beach continues inside the cabin, on the sand which also houses comfortable sofas draped in white cloths.

Maybe it is the archetypal form of the buildings, an air both ancestral and contemporary at the same time – together with evocations of illuminist theorems on the cabin as originary model – that gives the four structures such a surprising depth. In building two CABANAS not far from there, the Mateus’ seem to want to continue the precious landscape of the Reserva Natural do Estuário do Sado. A landscape of water and stilts: a lagoon/estuary that the ocean tides constantly mutate, alternating to the splendour of the blues of sky and water the sandy grey of the sea-beds of intricate and invisible canals from which rises a forest of stilts. A world of wood for walking on water, for mooring small vessels and inhabited by cabins and fishermen.

Two small parallelepipeds built with recycled wooden planks disposed vertically. The two structures acquire sureness in the landscape declining their own individuality through almost invisible gestures: a misalignment between the two which at the same time underlines the affinity and diversity of the geometry of the roofs, determined by the necessary inclinations for the disposal of rain water. It is once again the case of a functional hendiadys: the two small rooms – measuring around 10 sqm each – are in fact complementary, a cabin contains the bed and the services which, surprisingly, also constitute the entrance and can be opened towards the landscape; the second cabin is devoted to the day activities. Wooden planks placed on the beach unite the temporal dimensions – day and night – while a boardwalk communicates it with an old jetty, the true border between land and water. The material unity (old wood) and the modality of its realisation – the sincerity of the structure characterises both the interior and exterior spaces – gives the whole a chromatic unity which surprisingly blends in with the almost invisible horizon.

I have build a castle on the sea, of 3,66 x 3,66 meters, for my wife, said LC about his well-known Cabanon, pre-fabricated in Corsica and carried by ship to Cap Martin, not far from the house of his friends Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici. In Roquebrune, on a path that almost reached the sea where everything was small: the door, the stairway and the access to the cabin through the vineyards. Only the site was grand: a splendid bay with steep cliffs.

Translation by Luis Gatt

Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo

Dream house by Alberto Pireddu

(page 44)



In 1942, Ernesto Nathan Rogers relies on *Confessions of an anonymous* among the pages of “Domus” the description of his dream house, a beautiful house, “warm” and worthy dwelling place of human life:

This is my ideal home: away from you, enough for singing out of tune and being not heard, yet so close so I can greet you by waving hands and you could answer me.

It grows from the ground like a plant and is yet sovereign of the nature, assertive man trace. A piece of land at the bottom and a piece of sky at the top: among countless flowers, someone perfumes just for me and, in the night, a square of stars – among the infinite – lights up only for me.

My house changes face at the turn of the seasons; changes fronds rejuvenating itself every spring, in summer it has the coolness of the woods; colored in autumn, wrapped by the winter snow, underneath, my family germinates waiting for the sun. Let the walls be limits to the outside world, not obstacles: may they open all outside, may they close, half-close: eyes with eyelids and eyelashes or, perhaps, pores that could breathe the universe and bleed harmful moods.

My house is a body, as my body, holder of sorrows and joys, next to your border.

In penetrable bodies¹.

Rogers seems to materialize his dream not far from Noto, Sicily, in a small holiday house designed by Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo².

Here, among the almond and olive trees in a gentle slope towards the sea, two volumes functionally and formally distinct, interpenetrate under the same roof: the “manor house”, with its solid structure of reinforced concrete, and the iron body of the “guest’s residence”.

Equipped with a mechanism that determines movement on metal rails, animates the life of the house, protecting it during the winter and allowing it to unfold for the arrival of spring when, with the first sun, the walls finally open to illuminate the interior. In the changing size loggia, the large living room and the manor bedroom meet the *enfilade* of the guest’s accoutrements.

The lodge is a rarefied space, a room facing the sea, suspended on a metal grid. The building, in fact – by seeking a continuity of quotas with some existing buildings and trying to reach the sea horizon, over the treetops – does not touch the ground, but stands on concrete beams firmly anchored to the hill, while a steel structure supports the metal cage of the sliding volume and its relative staircase. And yet the house has “its own roots”³, encloses a private world taken away from indiscreet glances, so that no one can reveal the secret.

The project summarizes some key points of the poetry of Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo. Among them, it calls into question the Vitruvian *firmitas* through movement, the contraction and expansion of the architectural body and the idea that this may not last forever, but endowed with an “own life, that at a certain point turns off”⁴, a belief that seems to find echo in the words of Rogers “I do not ask my house to be eternal, but enclosed like an embrace”⁵. The same materials used denounce the acceptance of an impossible eternity – the concrete, which is now produced depending on the expected lifetime for a building, gas concrete of the partitions, the okumé of the ventilated walls – as well as the mechanical apparatus intended for an inevitable technological obsolescence.

‘Poor’ or at least ‘ordinary’ materials, commercially available and sometimes reminiscent of an industrial world, which architect experiments on numerous occasions, by placing them together poetically. It happens, for example, in the control tower in Marina di Ragusa⁶, in which a glass box is suspended on two opaque volumes externally defined by a coating of wooden planks and zinc-titanium panels; in the Scoglitti holiday house⁷ whose body of reinforced concrete confuses its own imperfections with those of the surrounding abusive landscape while portions of reinforcement not included in the cast support containers of the suspended beds; in the family house in Ragusa⁸, where selecting the steel for the platform and outside stairs reveals the wish to make addition parts recognizable compared to the work of removal on the main volume and reuse of the ruins to create a new, direct, relationship with the garden.

Then, the deep care for human life and transformations that it produces in architecture that, in a continuous changing of rules, cannot reach a final arrangement. This is, after all, the big idea behind the editorial project of the book *Loose Ends*, recently published, with its endlessly decomposable storyline and his papers impossible to be ordered, in a total abolition of all code structure.

The book itself is an architecture of “measures, rules, notes, wishes, requests ...”⁹, a house of cards, blank or pre-written, never equal to itself. Moreover, while quoting Gaston Bachelard, the dream house may not be definitive, because if it were so, the soul could not “find his vast life”¹⁰:

Perhaps it is good to keep a reserve of dreams towards a house that we will live later, later and later, so much later that we will not have time to realize it¹¹.

Translation by Arba Baxhaku

¹ Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *Confessioni di un anonimo del XX secolo*. 9° La casa dell’Anonimo, in “Domus” n. 176, agosto 1942, p. 333.

² Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo, *Loose Ends*, Lars Müller Publishers, 2014, FCN.2009.

³ Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *cit*.

⁴ Maria Giuseppina Grasso Cannizzo, *Sulla lingua, in donn’Architettura*, by Maria Grazia Eccheli, Mina Tamborino, Milano, FrancoAngeli 2014, p. 269.

⁵ Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *cit*.

